LOCAL LEGISLATORS.

Something About the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia.

SKETCHES AND PORTRAITS.

Chatty Comments on Members of Washington's Common Council—Who They Are and What They Have Done—An Earnest Aggregation Bent on Good Results.

When the Senate committee on the District of Columbia holds its first meeting for this session of Congress it will hardly recognize itself. Time and political opportunity have wrought many changes during the past year. The stately and sarcastic Ingalls has followed the course of empire and in his distant home indulges in agricultural delights; the active and faithful Spooner has been temporarily eclipsed, while the attentive but physically afflicted Farwell, too, has a successor who is not a republican. The vacancies caused by these enforced retirements have been filled and the committee has been increased in numerical strength from nine to eleven. The sudden death of Senator Plumb takes away one of the most vigorous of those of whom much is expected. Members of the committee, congratulated themselves on the accession which came to it when Senator Plumb was appointed. The committee has always had trouble with the committee on appropriations, because the latter body had to be convinced that the District committee knew what it was doing. To avoid all friction and misunderstanding Senator Plumb, who was chairman of the District subcommittee on appropriations, was assigned to a place, but the assignment has been nullified. As a working organization it is now believed to be stronger than any of its predecessors, and there is good solid reason for hoping that legislative results will follow its recommendations. The District committees of the Senate and House are to the city of Washington what the common council and board of aldermen are to most cities, so there is nothing either extraordinary or suspicious in the interest which residents of the national capital feel in those Congressmen who as proxies perform the duties which would be required of the Senators and Representatives of the District of Columbia if the District only possessed such titled beings.

CHAIRMAN M'MILLAN.

First, by reason of his designation as chairman, and second to none in his interest in local affairs, is James McMillan of Detroit. Few Senators have said less on the floor of the Senate and few have done more in committee than he. His efforts are always in the direction of results, and as his practical business knowledge is supported by tenacity of a polite but smiling description he has the "get there" faculty.

In manner Chairman McMillan is most pleasant, quiet and reserved; always ready to give time to those who have legitimate excuses for entering into conversation with him, yet sensible of the fact that his minutes are too precious to be frivolously disposed of. Senator McMillan realizes the weighty character of the burden which is now his and he is intent on making such a record as will earn the approval of his own conscience. If he does that the District of Columbia will have but little to complain of. He is fifty-three years of age, a successful business man, president of the great Michigan Car Company and interested in many large enterprises. He will endeavor to apply business principles to District legislation.

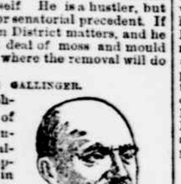
SENATOR HIGGINS.

A lawyer and a man of much nervous force, an energetic talker, too, when occasion requires, is Senator Anthony Higgins of Delaware. He, like the chairman, has had a great deal of experience in District matters—experience which may be turned to some practical account before the Fifty-second Congress makes way for the Fifty-third. Senator Higgins possesses a large store of legal knowledge, which is at the service of the committee. He graduated from Harvard law school and was admitted to practice in 1864; before that year was nearly gone he was appointed deputy attorney general of Delaware. From May, 1869, to 1876 he was United States attorney for Delaware, and, although he has been almost continually interested in politics, his law practice has increased and he has, metaphorically, waxed fat, not too fat, however. Senator Higgins is one of the popular Senators; a young man, as time is reckoned in the Senate. He is on the silvery side of fifty by a year.

SENATOR WOLCOTT.

Washington has not known much of Senator Edward Oliver Wolcott of Colorado. His assignment to the District committee was truly an infusion of young blood, for he was born as recently as 1848. Long Meadow, Mass., was his birth-place and all his early associations were of New England. He was at Yale College for awhile and in 1871 graduated from Harvard Law School. Then he went out to Colorado and practiced law with a great deal of success. He also practiced politics, and could be found wherever strife was most active. There is a pugnacious strain in the Wolcott blood. When the war was at its height the school boy—just sixteen years old then—served as a private in the one hundred and fiftieth Ohio volunteers, and he has not lost any force as a fighter. Senator Wolcott has the courage of his convictions and has on more than one occasion upset senatorial practices which were several years older than himself. He is a hustler, but he lacks veneration for senatorial precedent. If he takes an interest in District matters, and he probably will, a good deal of moss and mould will be removed just where the removal will do most good.

SENATOR GALLINGER.



Anxious to serve Washington and mindful of its best interests is Senator Jacob H. Gallinger of New Hampshire. He was born in Cornwall, Ontario, fifty-four years ago, but has been a resident of New Hampshire the greater portion of his life. Like Senator Plumb he was a printer in early life. His inclinations were toward a professional career, however, and in 1858 he graduated in medicine. Senator Gallinger is what may fairly be termed a successful politician. Since 1872 he has been a busy republican; was for a long time chairman of the state committee. He was one of the state's Representatives in the Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Congresses and could have had the nomination to the Fifty-first, but he did not want it; he preferred to succeed Senator Blair. When Dr. Gallinger was a member of the House he caused the democracy a good deal of trouble. He was a member of the House committee on printing and as such participated in an investigation of the government printing office, which worried Public Printer Benedict more than a little.

It is perhaps a little singular that Senator Gibson of Maryland, who has been assigned to the District committee, should have been one of Dr. Gallinger's opponents in that same printing office investigation. Senator Gallinger has a large stock of manly suavity and is personally a most pleasant individual. He has a host of friends in Washington.

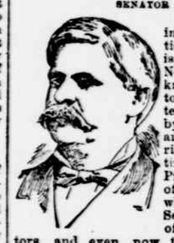
SENATOR HANSBROUGH.

The northwest, for the first time, has a representative on the District committee—an earnest worker, like two of his associates a printer by trade, and, more than all, a successful newspaper editor and proprietor. Henry Clay Hansbrough, whose home is now at Devil's Lake, N.D., was born in Illinois in January, 1848. California was his home for a number of years, and it was in the golden state that he learned "the art preservative." His career as a newspaper publisher commenced at San Jose in 1869, but he soon became connected with the San Francisco *Chronicle* and remained so until 1879. Then he went to Baraboo, Wis., and from there to Dakota territory. That was in 1882, and he at once went into the newspaper business. He prospered, was twice mayor of his town and after a little climbing on the political ladder was sent to the House of Representatives as the first member ever elected by the state of North Dakota. His majority was something like 14,000. He did not get the renomination to the Fifty-second Congress, so he captured the senatorship vacated by that other North Dakota journalist—Gil Pierce. Senator Hansbrough promises to do everything reasonable in behalf of Washington. He is a calm, shrewd business man, with a kindly, warm-hearted personality—a fair type of high-grade Americanism.

SENATOR HARRIS.

Senator Isham G. Harris of Tennessee is the senior democratic member of the committee. He is one of the best known of United States Senators and has always been a conservative friend to Washington. Senator Harris was born in Franklin county, Tenn.; when, his biographical sketch in the Congressional Directory does not state. He commenced the practice of law in 1841 and entered political life very soon thereafter. Repeatedly has he been honored by his state in various ways, and he is now serving Tennessee for the third consecutive senatorial term. The Senator is an authority on senatorial rules and methods of practice; in these matters he is remarkably precise and invariably correct. Outside of debate Senator Harris is but rarely inclined toward much conversation, and the newspaper men have so far failed to classify him with those who are ultra-communicative. When he does speak, however, he tells the truth, and generally without comment. In committee Senator Harris is the balance wheel which has been of much service. His information on local conditions is very broad.

SENATOR VANCE.

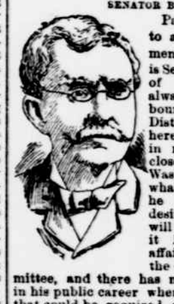


Second as to seniority in the democratic section of the committee is Senator Z. B. Vance of North Carolina. His knowledge of Washington is probably as extensive as that possed by any of his associates, and his desire to do the right thing at the proper time has never failed. Previous to the coming of that great affliction which impaired his sight Senator Vance was one of the jolliest of Senators, and even now the humor which is such a strong feature of his composition occasionally reaches the surface. He thinks that the national capital should be the finest of all the world's capitals—in an esthetic sense at least—and he has always been more than willing to help in the pleasing task of beautifying Washington. Senator Vance is always courteous—always the same old-style southern gentleman. He was born in North Carolina sixty-one years ago and has since 1852 been about equally engaged in law and politics, with the exception of some time spent in the confederate army. In 1862 he was elected governor of North Carolina and two years later was re-elected. Since then he has again been elected to that high office. He has been four times elected Senator.

SENATOR FAULKNER.

During the past four years no member of either house of Congress has given so much time and such unremitting attention to matters in which the District of Columbia is concerned as has Senator Charles James Faulkner of West Virginia. The committee member who expects to be more active in behalf of the city than he will needs be at work early and late. Senator Faulkner's interest is practical. He has sought and found structural weaknesses and in every possible way has endeavored to improve local governmental affairs. Especially has he looked after the law which is current in the District courts and he cannot be held responsible if some of its crudities and abnormalities are not speedily removed. Senator Faulkner, although a young man, is one of the democratic leaders in the Senate, and there is promise of the time when he will be "the" leader. He was born in 1847, and for a couple of years in the educational section of his life lived in France and Switzerland, his father then being United States minister at Paris. At the age of fifteen he entered the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington and served with the cadets in the battle of New Market. He entered the confederate army, was aid on the staffs of Gens. J. C. Breckinridge and Henry A. Wise, and surrendered with the latter at Appomattox. He is a lawyer of distinction, has presided on the bench and was sent to the Senate in 1887. Congress would be a most agreeable body if every member was built on the Faulkner plan.

SENATOR BARBOUR.



Painstaking and anxious to assist in the development of the nation's capital is Senator John S. Barbour of Virginia. This has always been Senator Barbour's attitude toward the District. He has lived here for a long time, and in many ways has been closely identified with Washington. He knows what is wanted, and when he believes the thing desirable can be procured will do his utmost to get it. His knowledge of local affairs has ever been at the disposal of the committee, and there has never been a period in his public career when he would not do all that could be required of him in the interest of the District. Senator Barbour, in point of years, is the oldest member of the committee, he having been born in Culpeper county, Virginia, seventy-one years ago. He studied and graduated at law from the University of Virginia, and has devoted himself to law, railroad matters and politics ever since. He was, in 1852, elected president of the railroad company then called the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Company, and served in that position until that corporation was merged into the Virginia Midland Company. He was president of the consolidation until he resigned in 1883. The Senator's service in the House of Representatives extended over the Forty-seventh, Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Congresses. He took his seat in the Senate in 1889.

SENATOR GIBSON.

Almost a Washingtonian, so far as local acquaintance and residence can bring it about, is Senator Charles Hopper Gibson of Maryland. Senator Gibson is loyal to Maryland, but he is an enthusiastic believer in this city and its future and will frankly confess at any time that Washington is the most beautiful of all centers of population. He is an advocate of liberality in appropriative legislation for the District and will to the extent of his power aid in the ameliorations and improvements which everybody who studies the subject admits are necessary. Senator Gibson is a Marylander by birth, his connection with the state and with the name of Gibson dating back to January 19, 1842. Law and politics have occupied the major portion of his days since 1864. He has received practical testimony to his worth by frequent election to positions of trust and prominence. He was a member of the House in the Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Congresses and at the opening of the present Congress took his seat in the Senate, having been appointed to succeed the late Ephraim K. Wilson. Senator Gibson, while a member of the House, was an active committeeman and he promises to do much in connection with District affairs. Personally the Senator is of fine appearance; in converse with his fellow-beings he is the incarnation of politeness.

CLERK MOORE.

Not a member of the committee, but its most important adjunct, is the committee clerk. Under the new regime this will be Mr. Charles Moore. Mr. Moore is a Michigan man by birth, a graduate of Harvard and a journalist of more than ordinary merit and repute. For some time Mr. Moore was an editorial writer on the Detroit *Tribune*, and since his coming to Washington with Senator McMillan he has been the capital correspondent for that paper. He has a wide circle of friends and acquaintances in this city; he will have more before he ceases to be clerk to the Senate District committee.

A CHRISTMAS EVE

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE DISTRICT.

Being a True Story of How Mistress Alice Headleigh Routed the Revelers and Ended the Orgies at Headleigh Hall.

WRITTEN EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE EVENING STAR BY MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

"A jolly place, 'twas said in times of old,
But something ails it now. The place is"
Wordsworth.

"I'LL NOT STAND THESE OUTRAGEOUS carryings-on any longer! I'll not stand it!"

The excited speaker was Mistress Alice Headleigh of Headleigh Hall. And when Mistress Alice said that she would not "stand" anything you might be sure she meant to "sit down on it."

She was but a little tiny mite of a woman, too; not yet twenty years old, with a baby face, with a fair skin, red hair, blue eyes and small features—very sweet and lovely to look upon. But she was given to express her will freely, and to have it obeyed promptly. It is a mistake to think that your tall, muscular female is the strong-minded woman and the family autocrat. She is not at all that. It is your fair, soft, babyish little angel, who is really the husband tamer and the household terror.

Mistress Alice Headleigh was the owner of Maj. Hercules Huntington Headleigh and of his house and lands, his slaves and cattle and everything that was his, including a brave, honest, generous heart.

And this is their story:

In the early days of the District, at a short distance across the Eastern Branch bridge, upon a thickly wooded hill, overlooking the river and the young city of Washington, there stood an old gray stone house, the center of an extensive tobacco-growing plantation. This was Headleigh Hall, which had been in the possession of the Headleigh family from the first settlement of this part of the country. It was soon after the peace of 1815 when Hercules Huntington Headleigh came into his estate. He was a man of whom the worst that could be said was that he was too fond of conviviality, and even that was an inheritance from his joyous race. His father was killed at the battle of Bladensburg. He himself had served through that war and at its close had been mustered out with the brevet rank of major. Then he retired to his estate across the Eastern branch. "To cultivate his paternal acres? To raise tobacco and improve cattle?" Not at all! That he left to his overseer and his negroes, while he himself lived a free and easy and convivial life: kept "bachelor's hall" and instituted a series of revels that caused the profane to play upon the time-honored name and pervert Headleigh Hall into "Headlong Hall." Such revels as would in our days of sobriety and temperance be considered "very bad form," but, in the days of our grandfathers of fast living and hard drinking, were dignified by the name of "princely hospitality." Very popular were the "stag suppers" of young Maj. Headleigh, not only amonghis young companions of the neighboring plantations, but also among the members of Congress, who, during the session, were accustomed to vary the dissipations of fashionable life in the city by crossing "the branch" and making "a night of it" at Headleigh Hall. They were always sure of a welcome, however unexpected their arrival. Sometimes they would come as a merry troop of horsemen, sometimes as a sleighing party, always sure of an uproarious greeting and a convivial night in a house where there was not a lady or even a white woman to act as a restraint upon their late hours or noisy songs and carousals. This was bad enough, but really there was nothing worse. Young Headleigh's housekeeper was an old colored woman, who used to rate her master in good round terms for his misdemeanors and tell him plainly that she was ashamed to let people know whom she belonged to.

People began to wonder why young Headleigh did not marry. He was thirty years old and a very handsome fellow—tall, broad-shouldered, dark-eyed. And more than one "sweet girl" lowered her eyes and voice when casually speaking with him at church, fair or races. But he was proof against such soft wooing. He was not the lady's man. He did not intend to put his neck under the matrimonial yoke.

But his time came at last. When a downright siege was laid to his heart, hand, fortune and freedom by a dowager with a house full of marriageable daughters, every one of whom was as redoubtable as the mother. He felt himself in deadly danger of falling into the hands of his most dreaded bugbears—a wife and a mother-in-law. He cast about in his mind wildly for some means of escape from imminent slavery. He thought of running away; of going to sea; of going west; of going "anywhere, anywhere out of the world," where possible mothers-in-law "went about like roaring lions seeking whom they might devour." But he hated traveling almost as much as matrimony.

One day he clapped his hands upon his knees and cried out:

"I have it! If I must marry, sooner or later, I'm blessed if I don't go and marry little Alice off hand! Then they will let me alone. She's as good as no wife at all. She's a nonentity, won't bore me, won't interfere with me in any way, and, above all, won't bring me a mother-in-law, or any other nuisance-in-law to interfere with my freedom."

Little Alice Somerville was his cousin and his orphan ward. She was the heiress of Sunny Slope, a small plantation on the Eastern branch. Now, at the age of eighteen, she was a parlor boarder in the Young Ladies' Academy in Georgetown, where she had been educated.

He lost no time in going to the boarding school and proposing to Alice. He was her honored guardian. She accepted him.

He gave a grand bachelor's supper at Headleigh Hall at which he announced his approaching marriage. It was a shock! But his guests did the proper thing in the way of congratulating him.

Two days later he married "sweet Alice" and brought her directly home to Headleigh Hall. On both sides it was as cool blooded a marriage as if it had been "arranged" by aristocratic parents. But he was by no means prepared for the position she promptly assumed as both mistress and master of the house, and still less for the ascendancy she speedily gained not only over his free agency, but over his free will. The truth is that during the honeymoon he fell deeply in love with the wife he had married in cold blood as a protection from calculating old women with marriageable daughters, and he became the slave of her whom he had taken to secure his freedom.

As it was late in February when the bride was brought home, and as Congress adjourned on the 4th of March, there were no more sudden inroads from Washington by riding or sleighing parties to "make a night of it" at Headleigh Hall that season. And the young planters in the neighborhood came only in the daytime and in company with their mothers and sisters to pay their respects to the newly married pair. The only festivities were dinner and dancing parties given and returned until the arrival of Lent put an end to them.

But the bridegroom was so contented with the company of his young wife that he wanted no other until early winter brought him a rival in her affections in the form of a boy baby, of whom he was naturally very proud, and with whom in company with the mother he liked to pass much of his leisure time. But as he grew accustomed to his honors the charm of novelty wore off.

Congress was in session: and one night in December, when the moon shone brightly as the snow covered the ground, Maj. Headleigh sat in his den down stairs with his dogs and his guns and his pipes and tobacco and Mistress Alice sat in her chamber reclining in an easy chair with her baby in her lap and her "mammy" at hand to wait on her, the holy silence of the night was broken by the merry sound of sleigh bells.

The major jumped up joyously to meet the unexpected party, who were no less heartily welcomed for coming uninvited.

There were six of them. At first they all declared that they had only stopped to see how the major and his wife were getting on, and that they were going down the road as far as Horse Head Tavern.

But the major declared that their arrival had saved his life, that he had been dying of dullness when the sound of the sleigh bells revived him.

"Dying of dullness! Where, then, was Mistress Headleigh?" some one inquired.

"Oh, Mistress Headleigh is entirely taken up with her boy," he said.

"A boy!" They wished him joy.

"Well, then," urged the proud father, "you must come in and drink the boy's health."

The gentlemen suffered themselves to be persuaded.

"Mammy," said Mistress Alice from her invalid chair, "go down stairs and see who it is that has arrived."

Mammy went and came back with the information that it was some "big bugs" (meaning gentlemen of quality) from the city.

The young wife sighed, for she had heard of the wild revels of her husband's bachelor life, but she allowed her nurse to put her and her baby to bed. After which "mammy," who was one of the Sunny Slope negroes and had been Alice's own nurse in childhood, set the room in order, mended the fire and laid down on her pallet to sleep.

The chamber presented a quiet, peaceful, holy scene in contrast to that which was going on in the dining room.

There host and guest gave themselves up to enjoyment. At first, while eating, they were quiet enough, but when the table was cleared and a great bowl of punch, with tobacco and cigars placed upon it, they began to be hilarious—sang songs with noisy choruses, told stories that set the table in a roar and growing more and more convivial kept up until the late dawn of the December day, when the lamps went out and the light crept in. Then the party broke up with many mutual congratulations of their host and themselves on the glorious time they had had.

Shortly after, leaving the tired men servants to clear away the debris of the supper, "the master of the house" crept softly upstairs, entered his wife's room and went up to her bedside.

"Awake, my little pet! I hope we did not disturb you. I only came in for a little talk, a lit—lit—little talk—with lit—little pet!" he stuttered.

She looked at him in sorrowful silence.

"Won't stay long! Only a little talk," he repeated.

"Maj. Headleigh, you are not in a condition to talk to me!" she replied with sad severity.

"Eh? Eh? What? Well, I'll be——," but he checked the oath that almost escaped him in his amazement at the tone taken by his "little blue-eyed angel," and then in an awkward embarrassment suddenly demanded:

"How's the little shaver? Let me look at him!" and he put out his hand to uncover the baby, but she prevented him.

"No, Maj. Headleigh, not now! I should be grieved and mortified that your son should see you in your present condition."

"I—I don't think the young—young gentleman would notice anything wrong," he exclaimed, bursting out in a fit of loud laughter.

When he had finished she said very quietly:

"Maj. Headleigh, I am very weak and weary. I need rest and sleep. Will you pardon me if I ask you to leave the room?"

"Well, now! I'll be——" but again he checked the oath upon his lips. He could not swear at that fragile creature and young mother, too. "Well, then, kiss me good night and I'll—I'll—I'll go," he stammered as he bent over her.

She turned away with an involuntary expression of disgust, which, however, he noticed, and which pained him.

"Wo-won't you kiss me goo-good night, Alice?"

"I beg you to excuse me. I cannot," she said. "Please go now. Tomorrow I shall have something to say to you when you will be in a condition to hear it," she added in a firm yet quiet tone.

And it was irresistible. He left the room.

Major Headleigh got up as usual to his breakfast. But he had scarcely finished it before he was summoned to appear before his wife.

And the stalwart sinner crept unwillingly upstairs to meet his fragile judge.

He felt in a rebellious and defiant mood. But when he met his wife—well! if she had been one of the tall, black-eyed daughters of the would-be mother-in-law he had so successfully escaped, it would have been another matter, but who could defy and rebel against such a frail little being? Where would be the glory of victory over a baby mother with a baby boy on her knee? Before she had said a word he began to apologize.

"You know, my dear, when gentlemen come to the house I cannot refuse to receive them, and if they stay late I cannot possibly send them away."

She made no comment.

"So what is to be done?" he inquired.

"I cannot tell just now. It is a new point of view and requires mature deliberation," she answered in a tone that made him uneasy.

He kissed her and the baby and went out to meet his overseer, he said.

Left alone Mistress Alice fell into deep thought. She must break up these revels or they would ruin her husband and break up her home. To begin with she must rouse herself and leave her invalid room, where she had been luxuriating in idleness, petting her baby and petted by mammy too long. She must be less absorbed in her boy and give more of her company to her husband.

It was full time also that she should be stirring about her house. Christmas was near at hand and Christmas company was expected at the hall. These were some relations of Maj. Headleigh. Mistress Alice had no near relations of her own.

Mistress Alice put on her most becoming gown and most bewitching cap (all married women, however young, wore caps in those days) and went down stairs and presided at the dinner table.

Maj. Headleigh in his surprise and delight at her unexpected appearance gave her an uproarious welcome and declared that she was the most beautiful woman on the face of the earth when he married her and that she was more beautiful now than ever before, even if he did say it.

Two days later the Christmas visitors arrived—all "poor relations," alas! but more heartily welcome on that account, for both the major and his wife had a deep sense of their Christian duties at the sacred season. There was Mr. Noah Bradshaw, a schoolmaster from the city, come to spend the Christmas vacation, and there was Miss Judy Green, who lived in a poor little farm house of her own, but relieved its poverty by long visits to her richer relations; and there were two Misses Eaton, young cousins from the Georgetown Academy of the Visitation, whose parents lived in Mississippi. Of these two girls no more need be said than that both were pretty blondes and that Eliza was a prude and Malvina was a madcap.

This little company arrived two days before Christmas in time for tea. They had tea in the cozy little wainscotted sitting room, where the two gentlemen and four ladies sat down together. But, tempting as that table was, Maj. Headleigh and Schoolmaster Noah Bradshaw begged to be excused after their second cup and went out on some business of their own. The ladies remained, leisurely sipping their tea and chatting. Mistress Alice sent for her baby and held him on her lap to be admired.

While she was still expatiating on the wonderful precocity of the infant she heard Maj. Headleigh in the hall giving orders that a great fire should be kindled in the open fireplace there and the large round table brought in from the dining room. Her heart sank; she knew that these preparations meant a revel of no ordinary character.

A word of explanation of the ground plan of the house is here necessary to the understanding of the events of the night. The entrance hall, which ran from front to back through the middle of the ground floor, was much the largest apartment in this old-fashioned house. Doors on each side led into parlor, library, sitting room and dining room. There was a wide fireplace on the right-hand side from the front, and a broad staircase rose from the back to the floors above. This was the only stairway that led to the bed chambers, and there was no other means of reaching them.

Mistress Alice listened in dismay, but she could not then interfere, and she could only hope that, as there were young ladies in the house, the entertainment for which the major was evidently preparing, though it might be on a large scale, would be orderly and would end at a seemly hour.

The tea table was cleared. Fresh wax candles were lighted upon the mantelpiece and on stands conveniently placed; logs were laid on the fire and the servants retired.

Then the ladies gathered around the fire with their work. The two young girls were embroidering white cambric slips for their hostess' baby. Miss Molly was knitting a pair of worsted socks for the major. Mistress Alice was rocking her baby.

It was still early in the long winter evening when the clatter of an equestrian party was heard outside. Mistress Alice hastily put her baby in Miss Molly's lap and went into the hall to speak to the major before the entrance of the guests. She found him there.

"You expect much company," she said, looking around at the large table and great fire.

"Yes, my dear. They invited themselves. I couldn't forbid them," he replied apologetically.

"Well, then, Maj. Headleigh, will you please remember that there are ladies in the house, young ladies, and restrain the gentlemen if you can from making a noise or telling unseemly stories or singing wicked and senseless songs, because every loud word uttered in the hall can be heard in the sitting room by the girls."

"Oh, I'll keep 'em in order, my dear; as far as a man can dictate to his visitors, you know," he added deprecatingly.

"And do not keep them very late. You know that we cannot get up to our bed rooms except by going through the hall, and we would not like to do that while the gentlemen were at supper."

"Good gracious! I never thought of that. But I won't keep them late—that is, if I can help it. Now run away, little one; they are here."

Mistress Alice returned to her friends and Maj. Headleigh admitted his visitors.

The ladies resumed needlework, Mistress Alice laid her sleeping babe in the cradle, and when all subjects of conversation had been exhausted, she produced a new novel which she had brought from Riordan's circulating library and said:

"Here is the last work out, and it is highly praised. Shall I read it to you?"

"Oh, yes! Do! do!" was the answer in chorus.

And Mistress Alice opened the volume and began to read. Soon after mammy had finished her supper she came in through the back door and asked if it was not time to put little marse to bed. Mistress Alice stopped reading to answer:

"Yes; but the gentlemen are at the table in the hall and you must not pass through with the child. It would not be respectful."

Mammy grunted and went and found a footstool and put it between the chimney corner and the cradle, sat down, took her knitting out of her pocket and so, uninvited, established herself as one of the "quality." Mammy, coming from the Somervilles of Sunny Slopes, despised the "Headleigh niggers," as she called them, and never condescended to their company.

Mistress Alice resumed her reading and was soon deep in the mysteries, murders, old style romance and miseries of the old-time romance. The conversation among the gentlemen in the hall, which at first reached them only as inarticulate murmurs, grew more distinct and was accompanied by an occasional burst of loud laughter.

Mistress Alice would pause in her reading while these explosions lasted, and when they had ceased she would go on again, but only for a short time, when she would again be interrupted in the same manner.

"Seems to me that the gentlemen are very noisy out there," said Miss Molly, when several men seemed to be talking aloud at the same time.

Mistress Alice took out her watch. "It is after 10 o'clock," she said, "they will soon go now. The major promised that they should not stay late."

And she took up her book and again began to read, but in vain. The talk in the hall grew louder. Not only the sound but the sense of the words reached them.

"We will not try to read any more," she said, closing her book.

The two young girls had rolled up their embroidery and were yawning, for they were accustomed to early hours at the academy. Miss Molly was knitting and nodding in her chair. Mammy had fallen fast asleep on her stool, and her half-finished stocking had slipped to the floor. She slept with the soundness of her race except when a louder noise than usual aroused her.

Presently some member of the company called out loud enough to be heard all over the house:

"A song, a song, a song from the captain!"

And the company joined the speaker by rattling their glasses on the board and repeating:

"Yes, a song; a song from the captain!

Then there followed excuses from "the captain" and insistance from his companions until he cleared his throat and began to sing a rude sea song, in which the company joined, rattling and clinking their glasses by way of accompaniment at the chorus.

"Oh, what a row! what a rumpus and a rioting
We (they) all endure, you may be sure, wo!—ho!—
to!—sea!!"

This song at its close was applauded with "three times three." The captain's health was drunk with bumpers.

"A song from Mr. Bradshaw!" cried one.

"Yes, a song from the schoolmaster!" said another, and "a song from the schoolmaster!!" echoed all the company.

The schoolmaster objected, pleaded his profession and remonstrated, but in vain; and so, at length, he began a song no better in any respect than its predecessor, and the company joined noisily in the chorus.

This song received the same honor as the captain's. The school master's health was drunk with equal applause.

As the revels went on, the drinking grew deeper, and the noise louder, and the songs and even the stories more objectionable—so objectionable, indeed, that the face of Mistress Alice became crimson with indignation.

She arose hastily and exclaimed:

"Come, young ladies! Come, Miss Molly! I must ask you to go with me to the kitchen. It is the only place to which we can escape from their words, if not from their noise."

And leaving the sleeping nurse beside the cradle of the sleeping baby, Mistress Alice passed out of the sitting room and through a linen room and a pantry into the spacious kitchen, where a large fire was smoldering in the evening fireplace. The servants had gone to bed. Her self-appointed followers after her, half asleep; the girls sank down into chairs with their heads resting on the kitchen table and went fast asleep; but Miss Molly sat bolt upright, and glaring through her round spectacles, expressed her opinion emphatically:

"A pretty kettle of fish, indeed, when lady visitors in a gentleman's house are kept out in their beds by a set of rowdies."

"The gentlemen do not know that they are keeping us up, Miss Molly, and of course the major cannot give them even a hint to go," said Mistress Alice, deprecatingly.

Miss Molly replied by a yawn suggestive of swallowing her little hostess, who did not sit down at all, but wandered uneasily about.

The revelry rose higher in the hall. The inmates of the kitchen heard the noise, but not the words of the company.

The wild night was wearing away. When the great clock in the rear of the hall struck 2 Mistress Alice crept into the sitting room and found the baby and the old nurse sleeping soundly through all the uproar, and then she went to the door and peeped through the keyhole. Her husband sat opposite and in line of her vision, with the light of the hanging lamp shining full upon his flushed face. She saw that he had already drank much more than was good for him. The old sea captain was singing, or rather roaring out, "The Bay of Biscay, Oh!" and the company was singing not only the chorus, but the whole song with him, with more regard to loudness than to harmony, and pounding the board with their glasses, forks or fists or whatever would make the most noise.

When the song was finished, the singer's health drunk with uproar and the noise had somewhat subsided one of the men who was a little less inebriated than the rest suggested that it was time to break up. Mistress Alice heaved a sigh of relief at the proposal. But her anticipations were vain.

"No, no!" the host exclaimed. "Not at all!" He hoped, he said, that they were having too good a time to cut it short. He hoped so.

Assurances were noisily showered upon him by the company that they had never had so good a time.

Then they must make a night of it. The man who made the suggestion to depart pointed to the clock. It was 2:30.

"Well, what of it?" demanded the host, speaking rather thickly by this time. "What of it? That only brings us to Christmas eve. We must celebrate that also."

"But the ladies," mildly suggested the schoolmaster, the only one present besides the host who really knew the inconvenience to which the women of the family were reduced. "The ladies, my dear Headleigh."

"The ladies, sir," loftily replied the major. "the ladies are—the ladies—God bless 'em! But we, gentlemen, we are the lords of creation. Yes, the lords of creation by Divine right."

"Mistress Headleigh! she is rather delicate," timidly suggested the schoolmaster, speaking in a low voice. But Major Headleigh answered in an audible tone, ignoring the last clause of old Noah's speech, and even old Noah himself.

"Mistress Headleigh, gentlemen," he said with all the dignity of drink, "is a model wife. She knows her place. She is a sample of the perfect woman spoken of by our venerable pastor in his sermon on the relative condition of the christian husband and wife. And this is the beautiful picture he drew."

Here, in quoting the preacher, he rose to his feet, stretched out his arm, assumed an oratorical manner, and delivered the words with a rolling of consonants where they referred to the husband and an attenuating of vowels where they referred to the wife, in a style that cannot be represented by any correct spelling.

"'Ho,' said our venerable pastor, 'he is sterr-r-ongth. she is wee-e-kness. He is wiss-sdom. She is sim-plee-cee-ty. He is orr-thorrity. She is soob-mees-sion.' A beautiful picture, gentlemen; a most beautiful picture!" concluded the orator, resuming his seat.

"Let us drink to the health of the ladies!" exclaimed the old sea captain. And the toast was "honored" with much enthusiam and noise.

But Major Headleigh seemed to have hit upon a favorite topic, for he continued:

"When our reverend minister uttered the words that I have just quoted, gentlemen, you might have heard a pin drop in the church. So deep was the interest. We would have loudly applauded had such a manner of expressive approval been allowed in church. For myself, gentlemen, I felt when he drew that picture of a perfect wife that he was portraying my own lovely companion. She has no will but mine. I will prove it to you; I will send for her now and have her make us a bowl of her incomparable egg-nogg. Say the word and she shall come."

But the word was not said.

"Maybe you doubt my authority in this house," he said with the irritable sensitiveness of his condition. "But, gentlemen, I will have you understand that if I am Ahasuerus at this feast, my wife is no Vashti. I will send for her and she will come."

"No, no, no!" was the chorus all around.

"If you do distnrb Mistress Headleigh we will leave in a body," said the sea captain. And they all agreed with him.

Nor would the major, to tell the truth, have dared to summon his "queen" to any such scene, tipsy as he was. He was too much in awe of her tender blue eyes for that.

"Then we will have another song," said the host.

"Fire in the mountains! Run, boys, run, boys!
Fire in the mountains! Run, boys, run!"

Mistress Alice crept back to the kitchen. They whom she had left there were all fast asleep in their uneasy positions. She did not disturb them, but returned to the sitting room and sat down by her baby's cradle. She was deeply moved by what she had seen and heard. Not as we might suppose, with anger, but with sorrow and mortification.

"Weak, weak, weak," she mused. "Weak as a child. With such a brilliant military record for courage, sobriety—all manly virtues—now to be at the mercy of such men as those who gather around him! Oh, my poor giant, you are an infant in their hands, and I must try to rescue you or you will be lost!"

While she so meditated she noticed that the fire in the sitting room was going out, so she went to the wood closet and brought in some fuel to mend it. She did the same for the smouldering fire in the kitchen, fearing that the girls might catch cold. She then sat down beside the cradle, but was so worn out with watching and worrying that from time to time she fell into short naps, from which she would be roused by some outburst of noise among the revelers. When the clock struck 5 her baby awoke. She took him up and cried over him. She suddenly roused up and took herself to task, saying that none but fools so weakly wept when they should resist. She laid her baby in the cradle again and renewed the candles. She went through the kitchen and looked out of the back door. It was as dark as Erebus. Not a star shining. But she heard the servants stirring in their room overhead.

She again went in the sitting room and peeped through the keyhole into the hall. The scene had changed somewhat. Some of the lights had gone out, others burned dimly. The room was now only partially illumined by the hanging lamp. The company were no longer singing. They seemed to have worn themselves out. Yet there was no movement toward separating. They appeared to be telling stories—weird, supernatural, blood-curdling, hair-raising, marrow-freezing stories. And in their half maniacal, half idiotic condition, at once exhausted and excited, the more awful the story the more they seemed inclined to believe it. The old sea captain was telling the story of Don Giovanni with much exaggeration, as an authentic ghost story and an incident that had occurred to his own grandfather who had been converted from the errors of his ways by the apparition of the——at one of his wild bachelor banquets.

The curious thing about this story telling, and story hearing was that though the interested company seemed to believe in their truth they never thought of bringing the moral home to themselves.

This last story gave Mistress Alice an idea. Her face, pale with waiting and worry, flushed as a rose again and her eyes brightened. She herself would raise the —— and try the effect upon these sinners.

She went to the kitchen and found Cassy, the cook, and Len, the errand boy, already down and busy over the fire making an early cup of coffee for Miss Molly and the two girls, who were now wide awake and waiting for it.

"Cassy," whispered her little mistress, "don't make the least sound; don't speak above your breath; the gentlemen don't know that it is morning; they don't know that any one is up, and I don't want them to know it. There! Give the ladies their coffee and be as still as a mouse. You will all have some fun presently. Where is Len?"

"Here he am now, young mist'ess, said the cook, as the boy entered from the yard.

The lady went to the door and looked out. The sky was black as ink, with clouds that had not the faintest tinge of dawn. A strong south wind was blowing up still heavier clouds.

By this time mammy had waked up and joined the party in the kitchen. Mistress Alice cautioned her also to be silent as death. Then she put out every light but one candle, lest by chance they should attract attention.

Then speaking in a very low tone she unfolded her plan of raising the —— and routing the revelers.

It was received with glee by all, but with perfect delight by the negro boy, who was to play the principal role in the performance.

All promised faithful co-operation and inviolable secrecy.

"Now, then, mammy, go into the linen room and bring the two large dark-blue bed curtains. And you, Len, take the dark lantern and go to the barn and bring me that horse's skull that is lying out there by the door. Also—now stop grinning and listen—bring me three or four pine cones from the woodshed; and lastly bring me your daddy's thick cane."

The messengers went quietly on their errands, and in a few minutes all the articles she required were brought in and laid on the kitchen table.

"Now go to the stable," she said to the boy, "and put a bridle on Satan, the black horse, and bring him here."

The boy started on his errand. Then Mistress Alice threw a shawl over her head and went out into the yard and around to the back door of the hall. She cautiously tried the door. She silently turned the latch and opened it a few inches. The